

Program, and I will be joined by a number of colleagues tonight to talk about that. I would just like to say that as a physician who practiced in the northern side of Atlanta for over 20 years taking care of kids, I take personal offense to anybody who says that those of us who have not supported so far the State Children's Health Insurance reauthorization bill don't care about kids. Clearly, we care about kids. I spent my entire professional life caring for kids.

The other side says, well, 81 percent of the American people want SCHIP. Well, they do when you ask them the question, do you support the State Children's Health Insurance Program? And I ask that of my folks when I go home and have meetings and talk to Rotary Clubs and other kinds of groups. And I have asked them over the past 2 or 3 months, do you support renewing the State Children's Health Insurance Program? And sure enough, the vast majority of the people raise their hand, and as well they should. And I ask them to keep their hand up. And then I said, now, would you support that bill if you knew that poor kids were not going to be taken care of before kids in wealthier families? Put your hand down if you wouldn't support that bill if you knew that kids from higher income families would get insurance paid for by the taxpayer before lower income kids. And about one-third or so of the hands come down; still a number of hands up there. And I say that because that's what is in the bill that the majority party passed and that was vetoed by the President, and then we sustained that veto.

And then I say, well, now, would you support that State Children's Health Insurance Program if you knew that it also covered childless adults? And a number of other hands come down. And I don't make that up. I ask that question because that's in the bill. Now we've got about one-half or maybe one-third of the folks still raising their hand saying they would support the bill. I say, now, would you support the bill if you knew that 2 million kids would be forced from private personal health insurance onto public, State-run, government-run bureaucratic medicine? And you get almost all of them coming down at that point. They've kind of gotten the clue that in the fine print in the bill, it's not what they've been led to believe.

And then I ask them, well, would you support the bill if you knew that in order to make the funding work, you would have to have 22 million new smokers in America because it's paid for by tobacco tax, would you support it now?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to tell you the results of this unscientific poll. But the fact of the matter is, not an opinion, but the fact of the matter is when I get through outlining what was in the bill, there isn't a hand left. There isn't a hand still raised that said they would support that bill.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that's why the numbers have come down. In the length of time that the majority party has been demagoguing this issue and trumpeting out their radio ads and their television ads across this Nation, what has happened is that the American people have recognized that the story that they were being told by this majority party, the Democrat leadership, was, in fact, not the truth. It may have been an opinion; it certainly wasn't the truth.

And so now what we see is 55, 60, 60-plus percent of the American people saying yes, we want to help poor kids, absolutely, that's appropriate. And we'll talk tonight about how we should do that, a positive message, an upbeat message, an optimistic message, a message that says, yes, Americans are generous, we know that, and they believe that, in fact, there is a better way, there is a better way to do business here in Washington, hopefully to raise those numbers. There is also a better way to fashion a bill that would provide health insurance for low-income kids.

So I am pleased to be joined tonight by a couple of colleagues, my good friend from New Jersey, who certainly knows fiscal issues as well as the issue of State Children's Health Insurance Program. I look forward to your comments this evening and yield to my good friend Mr. GARRETT.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for heading this program tonight to bring about the Truth Squad, which when I'm not here on the floor, I'm in my office turning on C-SPAN to make sure that I can find out the latest of what the actual facts are, because we can't always be assured that we hear them correctly from the other side of the aisle.

Actually, that's where I want to begin on this one. I was tuning in as I was doing some work at my desk for the last 10 or so minutes of the other side of the aisle, and I was a little bit amused by their closing comment. They seem to be chagrined by the fact that they don't have the opportunity to get the message out, if you were listening to them, that the President seems to be able to have the bully pulpit and be able to get the record straight out to the American public, and they don't. I had to scratch my head at that time because I thought, well, gee, doesn't the Democrat Party now control both this House, isn't NANCY PELOSI now the Speaker of this House? Isn't HARRY REID now the lead in the Senate as well? I thought the Democrat Party was the majority party.

And I know that every time that I leave this Chamber during the day there are microphones out there waiting for speakers to speak. And they're not coming to me to ask for comments; they are looking to the Democrat majority. So I think they were a little bit flippant or disingenuous, if you will,

when they're saying that they're not able to get the message out. I think what they are really saying, though, is the message that is getting out is not a truthful message, and some of the points that you've already made.

And if I may just touch upon a point or two here. If you go back in time a little bit to when President Clinton was in office, he laid out the groundwork of what his vision was for health care in this country. He told us where he would like to take this country and maybe where his wife would also like to take this country when it comes to health care. And he said that he wanted government-run healthcare. He wanted universal, socialized, Washington-controlled health care. And how would you get there, he said? Well, he laid it out in plans; he put it out in a book, almost, for us. He said, you get there not overnight, although I guess HILLARY CLINTON tried to do that, but he said, no, you get there incrementally. First what you do is you insure the indigent children, then you will insure all the children, and eventually you will insure all the adults as well. And what does that bring you to? Well, that's socialized, government-run and controlled health care. Now, that may be something that he would like and maybe a small segment of this country would like, but when I go back to my constituents, they remind me that Washington government may not be the most effective and efficient entity in the entire world of delivering services. They remind me of what happened back when Katrina occurred and we had FEMA step in to try to deliver services, and it was abysmal. They remind me continuously, regardless of which party is in control, earmarks, and we can talk about that ad nauseum later on probably, about the waste, fraud and abuse when it comes to spending their hard-earned dollars on earmarks.

They remind me, also, some of them who were trying to leave this country during this past summer for a summertime vacation and they found out that they needed to get a visa in order to do so. And they could not get their visa even though they put in their request one, week, two weeks, three weeks, eight weeks, nine weeks in advance. A very basic function of the U.S. government to supply visas to people, and they couldn't get them on time. They remind me that the government couldn't even do one of their basic functions.

They remind me, finally, when it comes to what is one of the most seminal issues when it comes to any government, and that is to protect your borders, and they say, you know, Congress, here under this majority, can't even get that issue resolved and done. We can't get the money to the border security guards. We can't get that fence built along there. If the government can't do those functions, they ask me, why in the world do we want to turn over our control, life-and-death